

Coursework: procedures for submission, extensions and remission of penalties for late submission

1. Introduction

During the preparation of the Assessment Policy it became evident that there are a number of issues regarding assessment that are not clear or require updating. A number of these aspects warrant additional discussion including the submission of work (including electronic submission), the use of extensions and penalties for late submission. The Academic Regulations regarding Assessment also need to be reviewed and updated to support any changes made in aspects relating to coursework. Academic Affairs will be working closely with Registry in this regard.

Following the approval of the Assessment Policy at Academic Board, meetings have been held with Schools to consult on a number of aspects including coursework submission / extensions / late coursework penalties which is main subject of this paper. In line with the Assessment Policy the approach employed by the institution must be uniform across Schools to ensure equitable and fair management of student work in accordance with their individual circumstances as applicable.

The current Academic Regulations relating to Coursework are as follows in Section G:

14. Non Submission of Coursework

Students who fail to submit coursework by the deadline set by the Programme will receive a grade of zero for that assessment. Resit penalties will be applied unless the student makes a successful extenuating circumstances claim for a resit without penalty.

15. Late Submission of Coursework

No extensions will be granted for coursework. All coursework submitted after the deadline will receive a mark of zero. The mark will stand unless the student has received approval for a late submission through a mechanism approved by the relevant School and supported by appropriate evidence.

2. Feedback from Schools

In meetings with School representatives it has become clear that the approaches to managing late coursework are not uniform across Schools even though they may appear to comply with the current Academic Regulation requirements.

This situation is unacceptable for a number of reasons including the following:

- It does not comply with the requirement that assessment processes should be clear, equitable and fair in line with the new Assessment Policy
- It is confusing for students, particularly those on combined programmes across different Schools
- It can be confusing and create a conflict of interest for staff (particularly new staff) in managing student requests around late work.

Schools have requested that the process be clarified and guidance centralised. During discussions Schools also highlighted the need to maintain an adequate level of objectivity while providing a sympathetic and considerate approach to students in line with our institutional culture and strong sense of pastoral care. Although some Schools requested that the management of all requests for extension / remission should be centralised, the

implementation of a centralised scheme in a timely manner would be difficult to manage. In addition this may be construed as a rather heavy-handed approach by students. Centralised management does not appear to be supported across the sector with local approval at Faculty / School level the norm. There does however need to be some central oversight of these processes. It is suggested that School decisions are reported to the Extenuating Circumstances Committee who could keep under review the frequency and nature of remissions granted and to audit the process from time to time to ensure equity and fairness.

The oversight of students on combined programmes will also need to be taken into consideration and suggestions for the decision-making regarding remission of penalties for these students have been included in the proposals outlined in this paper.

3. Feedback from Students

In a meeting with the SMSU President and a Student Representative a lengthy discussion on late assessment also supported the need for a clear and consistent approach to avoid confusion across the student body. The student representatives were aware of differing applications of the Late Submission Policy across Schools which were considered unfair.

4.0 Proposal for Coursework Management at the University

A wide range of policies on coursework management are applied across the sector with little justification apparent for the choices made in each case. In the majority of cases it is clear that the policies are applied across the entire institution although some local faculty discretion is acceptable for practical reasons such as the use of a locked box for handing in paper-based work rather than a Faculty office.

In attempting to balance the responsibilities of the institution with the needs of the students the following procedures should be applied for the submission, extension and remission of penalties for coursework.

4.1 Specification of Coursework

Module Convenors are expected to provide students with information as to the required form and submission deadline for each piece of work. Additional information that must be provided to students within Programme Handbooks and Module Guides will be provided in template form for completion by Programme Directors / Module Convenors.

4.2 Coursework Submission

Coursework should normally be submitted to a designated person who will record the date (and, where appropriate, the time) of submission on a submission record and issue a dated (and, where appropriate, timed) receipt. For work which counts toward summative assessment, it is recommended that for written work or simple artefacts that the designated person is a secretary or technician in a named location. Schools are **required** to issue a signed, dated and (where appropriate) timed receipt in acknowledgement of dissertations.

Schools may make alternative arrangements for submission of coursework, provided that the security of the submitted work is ensured and that procedures are in place to distinguish between work submitted before and work submitted after the deadline. Some Schools which process large volumes of coursework may require students to post work in a locked box in the School Office. Appropriate arrangements should be made for receiving coursework during the vacations.

Where the examination for a taught postgraduate programme involves the preparation and submission of a dissertation, the student must deliver the dissertation personally or send it by recorded delivery to the School to arrive not later than the date specified in the relevant module description (or other formal written notification).

4.3 Extensions to dates of submission and remission of penalties

4.3.1 Formative assessment

Work for formative assessment is submitted so that the student can benefit from feedback. Submitting such work late is discourteous and disrupts the plans staff will have made in allocating time to provide the feedback. The penalty for late submission, therefore, is forfeiting any right to feedback. Students may approach the member of staff who would normally read and comment on the work in order to apologise, present excuses and request feedback. In the case of late submission of formative work, it is entirely up to the member of staff to agree or not, and, if agreeable, to determine the time when such feedback will be given.

4.3.2 Summative assessment

(a) Extensions to submission deadlines

Extensions are not permitted within the current system. If a student thinks that they are likely to submit work late, he or she must be informed that they will need to complete an Extenuating Circumstances form and have this approved to ensure that their work can be considered without penalty.

(b) Remission of penalties

Requests for remission or removal of a penalty for late submission should be made on the University's Extenuating Circumstances Form, which should be submitted to the School Office of the School which 'owns' the student's programme **within 10 working days** of the submission deadline for the student's request to be considered so that the work can be marked and moderated in time for the Programme Examination Board. The form would ordinarily be submitted with the work and supporting evidence. After 10 working days, any extenuating circumstances submitted for consideration should be submitted to the University Exams Office directly with supporting evidence.

While it is stressed that a penalty for late submission will be removed for good reason and in line with the Extenuating Circumstances Policy, it is also recognised that where a proper reason exists an extension or request for removal of a penalty will not be refused unreasonably.

Decisions on removal of penalties for late submission, as with decisions on other extenuating circumstances procedures, will be made by the Programme Director of the School which 'owns' the student's programme, or a person nominated by the Programme Director. In the case of requests for extensions in respect of modules which are 'owned' by another School, the Programme Director of the School 'owning' the student's programme remains responsible for the decision, but should consult the Programme Director of the School 'owning' the module prior to a decision.

Instances of remission of penalties for late submission should be recorded by the School responsible for the student's programme, which must inform the School owning the module in respect of any decision taken. A list of all remissions approved at School level within an

examination period must be presented to the corresponding meeting of the University's Extenuating Circumstances Committee. Any student requiring more than two remissions in one year should be seen by the Programme Director and appropriate advice given or suitable action taken.

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